Amendments To The Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims

1. **(presently amended)** A method for making a block or gradient final (co)polymer comprising a first step of radically polymerizing a mixture of ethylenically unsaturated monomers in the presence of a radical precursor and I_2 or a iodine chain transfer agent to obtain an iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer, wherein the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer comprises at least 50 mole% of methacrylate monomers, ~~in the presence of a radical precursor and I_2 or a iodine chain transfer agent~~, followed by a second step of radically polymerizing a mixture of ethylenically unsaturated monomers in the presence of a radical precursor and the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer ~~of the first step~~ wherein the intermediate polymer has end groups predominantly of the iodine-containing methacrylate type.

2. **(original)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the mole ratio iodine atom-containing intermediate polymers to the radical precursor is greater than 0.1n, wherein n stands for the number of radicals effectively generated per molecule of radical precursor.

3. **(presently amended)** The method according to claim 1 wherein at least one of the polymerization of the first step or the polymerization of the second step occurs at a temperature lower than about 130°C.

4. **(original)** The method according to claim 3 wherein the temperature is lower than 110°C.

5. **(original)** The method according to claim 3 wherein the temperature is lower than 90°C.

6. **(original)** The method according to claim 3 wherein the temperature is lower than 70°C.

7. **(original)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the polymerization in the first and second steps are performed in the presence of an epoxide-containing compound.

8. **(original)** The method according to claim 7 wherein the mole ratio of the epoxide to the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer is greater than 0.01.

9. **(original)** The method according to claim 7 wherein the mole ratio of the epoxide to the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer is greater than 0.05.

10. **(presently amended)** A method for making a block or gradient final (co)polymer comprising a step of radically polymerizing a mixture of ethylenically unsaturated monomers in the presence of a radical precursor and an iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer or a mixture of iodine atom-containing intermediate polymers, wherein the iodine atom-containing intermediate ~~polymer~~ polymer(s) comprises at least 50 mole% of methacrylate monomers ~~and is obtainable from a polymerization of ethylenically unsaturated monomers~~ wherein the end group of the intermediate polymer(s) predominantly is of the iodine-containing methacrylate type.

11. **(presently amended)** The method according to claim 10 wherein the mole ratio of the iodine atom-containing intermediate ~~polymer~~ polymer(s) to the radical precursor is greater than 0.1n, wherein n stands for the number of radicals effectively generated per molecule of radical precursor.

12. **(original)** The method according claim 10 wherein the temperature during the polymerization step is lower than 130°C.

13. **(original)** The method according to claim 12 wherein the temperature is lower than 110°C.

14. **(original)** The method according to claim 12 wherein the temperature is lower than 90°C.

15. **(original)** The method according to claim 12 wherein the temperature is lower than 70°C.

16. **(original)** The method according to claim 10 wherein the polymerization step is performed in the presence of an epoxide-containing compound.

17. **(original)** The method according to claim 16 wherein the mole ratio of the epoxide to the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer is greater than 0.01.

18. **(original)** The method according to claim 16 wherein the mole ratio of the epoxide to the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer is greater than 0.05.

19. **(original)** A method according to claim 10 wherein the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer is obtainable by polymerization of a mixture of ethylenically unsaturated monomers comprising at least 50 mole% of methacrylate monomers in the presence of a radical precursor and an iodine or an iodine chain transfer agent.

20. **(original)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the mole ratio of the I_2 to the radical precursor of the first step is between 0.05n and 0.5n, wherein n stands for the number of radicals effectively generated per molecule of radical precursor.

21. **(original)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the iodine chain transfer agent is sulfonyl iodide.

22. **(original)** The method according to claim 21 wherein the mole ratio of the sulfonyl iodide to the radical precursor of the first step is greater than 0.1n, wherein n stands for the number of radicals effectively generated per molecule of radical precursor.

23. **(original)** A method according to claim 1 wherein the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer has a molecular weight of less than 10,000.

24. **(original)** A method according to claim 1 further comprising a third step of removing the iodine atom in the final polymer.

25. **(original)** The method according to claim 24 wherein the iodine atom is removed by nucleophilic reaction, by heating, or by reaction with a radical-generating compound, optionally under reducing conditions.

26. **(presently amended)** A block or gradient (co)polymer <u>obtained</u> ~~obtainable~~ by the method of claim 1.

27. **(original)** A film forming composition comprising the block or gradient (co)polymer of claim 26.

28. **(original)** A coating composition, adhesive or ink formulation comprising the block or gradient (co)polymer of claim 26.

29. **(original)** An automotive or industrial coating composition comprising the block or gradient (co)polymer of claim 26.

30. **(original)** A rheology additive, surfactant, dispersant, adhesion promoter or flow improvement additive comprising the block or gradient (co)polymer of claim 26.

31. **(presently amended)** A block or gradient (co)polymer obtained ~~obtainable~~ by the method of claim 10.

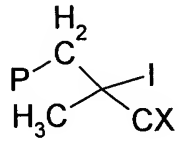
32. **(original)** A film forming composition comprising the block or gradient (co)polymer of claim 31.

33. **(original)** A coating composition, adhesive or ink formulation comprising the block or gradient (co)polymer of claim 31.

34. **(original)** An automotive or industrial coating composition comprising the block or gradient (co)polymer of claim 31.

35. **(original)** A rheology additive, surfactant, dispersant, adhesion promoter or flow improvement additive comprising the block or gradient final (co)polymer of claim 31.

36. **(new)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the iodine-containing methacrylate end group has the formula:



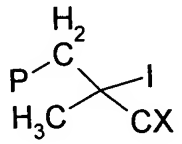
wherein P stands for polymer and CX is an acid, anhydride, ester, amide, or nitrile group.

37. **(new)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer additionally comprises other (co)monomers which may be of the (meth)acrylate, styrene, vinyl ester, and maleate type.

38. **(new)** The method according to claim 1, wherein the molecular weight of the intermediate polymer is less than 20000.

39. **(new)** The method according to claim 1 wherein the mole ratio iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer to the radical precursor is greater than 0.1n, wherein n stands for the number of radicals effectively generated per molecule of radical precursor.

40. **(new)** The method according to claim 10 wherein the iodine-containing methacrylate end group has the formula:



wherein P stands for polymer and CX is an acid, anhydride, ester, amide, or nitrile group.

41. **(new)** The method according to claim 10 wherein the iodine atom-containing intermediate polymer additionally comprises other (co)monomers which may be of the (meth)acrylate, styrene, vinyl ester, and maleate type.

42. **(new)** The method according to claim 10, wherein the molecular weight of the intermediate polymer is less than 20000.